1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

Descent is patrilineal; but we have already noted that children often respect the clan emblem of their mother as well as of their father; and it may be for this reason that the Fakan sub-clan, who freely intermarry with the Agbat, have come to adopt the crocodile emblem of the Agbat clan. As regards the attitude displayed by children to their respective parents, Katab children are not over-respectful to their fathers. They look after their mothers' interests zealously, and think little of striking their fathers on their mothers' behalf, which is not surprising in a state of society where polygyny has run riot.

Inheritance.—Inheritance is patrilineal. In the exceptional case already noted, a sister's son may receive a share of his maternal uncle's property; and a case came to my notice of a man inheriting his maternal grandfather's widow. The general rule, however, is that a man's property and titles pass to his sons or paternal nephews, brothers or paternal cousins, according to the circumstances and character of the inheritance. Females do not inherit from males, husbands do not inherit from wives, parents do not inherit from their children, and grandchildren do not inherit from their grandparents (with the single exception that a grandson may inherit his paternal grandfather's young widow).

If a man dies, and he was the holder of a title, the title passes to the next senior brother or paternal cousin, if he is considered a suitable person to hold the office. But his property passes to his grown-up sons, among whom it is divided in comparatively equal shares. If the children are young they pass under the guardianship of the deceased's brother or cousin, who would take them to his compound (provided he had a separate compound) and would there care for them until they had reached an age of discretion, when they would be reinstalled in their father's compound under the protection of the eldest son. If he had no sons of his own the brother who had inherited might retain one of the deceased's younger sons to look after him in his old age. Again, if the deceased's children are under age, his widows are inherited by his younger brothers or cousins, provided the widows offer no objection. He would take them off to his own compound, or he might keep one and hand another over to a brother or cousin according to the wishes of the deceased. If, however, the widows had sons who were old enough to farm they would remain with their children in their late husband's

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

273 liquid is drained off, leaving the sediment, poured into another pot, boiled and left to cool, and is then ready for use.

592 252 *Various Social Regulations.*—Each Katab woman takes one complete day's turn at cooking the food for the entire household, old women alone being exempted from this duty. Thus the principal wife of the head of the household may cook to-day, the second wife to-morrow, a son's wife on the following day, and so on. Numerous jealousies arise from the practice. A wife will take notice of the fact that her husband does not appreciate her cooking, and rival wives will watch to see that the food supplied by the cook of the day represents the amount of corn issued for that day. Women of the compound will charge the cook with having kept back a proportion of the corn in order [841] to sell it in the market for her own advantage. Women are not allowed to cook during their menses. Food cooked by a woman in this condition is said to affect the eyesight of the person who eats it. Married women help their mothers-in-law in various domestic duties, especially in the matter of the preparation of meals, and junior wives assist the senior wives. The senior wife, it may be noted, is the first wife married, and she may be a mere child in years to the second wife. The junior wives eat their 264 meals at the porch of the hut of the senior wife, who is the [595] president of the female society.

Men do not eat with women, and there are numerous rules as to who may eat from the same calabash. A father, for example, would avoid sharing his calabash with his eldest son; it would create disrespect. He would share his meal with his youngest son, or better still, with his grandson. The sons also have their own rules. The eldest son would avoid sharing his calabash with the son immediately junior—he would share it with the next but one, and so on.

513 595 A Katab husband sleeps two nights successively with each wife. If he has a hut of his own his wife sleeps there; but otherwise he sleeps in his wife's hut. The first wife, we have said, is the senior wife socially, and she is the "real wife", for even if she abandons her husband she will usually one day return. [775] It is believed that in the future life a man has one wife only and that she is the woman he had first married.

512 *Daily Life.*—We may now give a rough summary of the daily life of the Katab. Rising at sunrise the head of the household

Women of all sections of the Katab tribe also wear a stud or plug (about half-an-inch in diameter and length) in the upper lip. This is not an uncommon feature in Nigeria, but is not found among immediately adjacent peoples, so far as can be determined, and so effectively sets off members of the Katab Group from their neighbours all around.

As distinctive as the *oyam*, though surprisingly neglected by Meek in his definition of the Katab culture-complex, is the massive head-board or tray on which women of the Katab Group carry their loads: this is of unusual size, often a yard long and half as wide, and ovoid (or an elongated octagon) in shape: it is carved of a light-weight wood, flat, with a low rim, sometimes decorated with incised geometrical (rarely, stylized but realistic animal) figures, and invariably stained with red ochre. Meek notes that among the Katab proper a mother delivers her child on her head-board which "thereafter bears a semi-sacred character." The precise distribution of this article cannot be determined, but it does not appear to be used outside the area now occupied by the Katab Group.[7]

The dress of men of the Katab Group does not seem to be distinctive in any particular detail. The traditional garb appears to have been a skin loin-covering, and elders were distinguished by a skin across the shoulders. To-day, cloth is commonly used in place of skin; Hausa-Fulani caps, particularly the *fula*, and gowns, even the *riga*, may be worn by elders in civil occupations. But the priests maintain traditional styles, and all cloth is cast off at religious observances. There is some evidence that certain members of the Group,[8] if not all, wear the penis-sheath—an item virtually universal among tribes immediately to the east and south, in Plateau Province, though apparently not found in historic times westward in Nigeria.

Tribal marks of the same pattern are worn by Katab proper, Ataka, Ikulu, Kagoro, Kaje, Kamantan, and Moroa: for a man, these consist of 41 vertical scars across the forehead, nine on each cheek, and a fringe of 24 tiny cuts along the edge of the jaw; they are similar for a woman, but number 55, 17, and 26 respectively. In addition women receive intricate markings on chest, abdomen, and back. According to Meek (1931) "boys commonly refuse to be marked" to-day; the position as regards women is not clearly stated, but adult women attending the Kafanchan market in 1949–50 with very few exceptions had the markings described. There is no clear information regarding the markings used, if any, by Jaba, Kachichere, Kagoma, and Kaninkon. Early investigators ascribe the invention of these marks to the Katab proper.

(iv) *Social Organization: Marriage Customs*

Katab practices do not clearly distinguish the members of the Group from certain of their neighbours (especially the peoples of the Kauru hills, the Chawai, Irigwe, Kadara, even—according to D. A. Percival—the Shuwalbe and Buli tribes of Fulani in the area, among others); but the practices outlined below are apparently universal among members of the Group, with the possible exception of Kaninkon, about whom no information is available.

(*a*) *Secondary Marriage Constituting Serial Polyandry:* A virgin goes to live as a wife with a man who has made customary payments and performed farm-labour for her parents. After a period fixed by public opinion as decorous, she may leave her first (primary) husband to live with another man, who has secretly won her favour and secured by payments to her parents rights over children which she may bear him: she is, thus, his wife in every sense, but her primary marriage has not been dissolved, and she may, in due course, return to her primary husband. In theory, she may add indefinitely to the number of her husbands, circulating among them, living with each in turn for as long as she chooses (but never less than the fixed period); in practice, however, the number is usually small, and a woman may

[7] Wooden head-trays are used elsewhere, most notably by near neighbours of the Katab peoples on the High Plateau, but patterns differ radically from the Katab.

[8] Namely, Katab proper, according to Meek in *Northern Tribes*, though he fails to mention the subject in *Tribal Studies*, Moroa, according to Temple, and Kaje, according to Reynolds.

2: Gunn E-4 (no date) 1956 FF38 Katab FF38

never contract a secondary marriage. (Polygyny is also practised among members of the Katab Group.)

(*b*) *Prohibition of Secondary Marriage Within the Local Group:* The local group (hamlet or village), whether or not its males form a single clearly defined kin-group (clan, sub-clan, or lineage), is invariably a group within which secondary marriage cannot be sought. Similarly, lineage and sub-clan always constitute such groups. In some cases, when the large-scale kin-group, the exogamous unit ("clan"), is large and comprises a large number of local groups (and lineages), secondary marriage within the exogamous unit may be enjoined, i.e., a man is encouraged by public opinion to take as secondary wife only the wife of a fellow clansman, the member of a different lineage and village, and of a different sub-clan. If the clan is very small, however, the whole clan may be designated the "wife-stealing" unit.

(*c*) *Inheritance of Grandfather's Wives:* As Meek remarks, such is "necessarily of rare occurrence," but appears to be permitted among all tribes of the Group. All save Ikulu recognize also inheritance of father's widows, and it may be that both junior and senior levirate are almost universal.

(v) *Religious Practices: Head-Hunting*

Connected apparently to some extent with secondary marriage is the "dodo" cult known among Katab proper, Kachichere, Kagoma, Kagoro, Kaje, and perhaps others of the Group as *obwai* (*abwai*). It appears to differ little in those communities for which descriptions of it are available; in many of its details, too, it seems to be virtually identical with the *dodo* cult of the Kadara of Kufana, Kajuru District, described by Smith, which may be related to the tradition of Kajuru-Kadara domination of part or all of the Katab area at some period in pre-Fulani times.

Head-hunting was widely practised among the Katab peoples, as among many of their neighbours, Aten, Irigwe, Chawai, and others. The taking of a head apparently gave a man the status of elder and was always the occasion of ritual: captured skulls were preserved. It seems that wars were not infrequent between and among members of the Group, but within the Group each member apparently respected the dead of certain other members (the Kagoro, for example, took Ataka and Kaje heads, but never Moroa or Katab proper), and there is every indication that the favoured game of all members was Fulani and Hausa.

ECONOMY[a]

Occupations: Division of Labour

Katab are primarily farmers; the bulk of the farm work appears to be done by males,[b] though women, who may help with the planting and harvest, carrying the crops from the farm to the compound, maintain their own small garden plots at the back of their huts. Livestock (see below) is largely the property of women and is tended by children. Men keep bees(in hives in tall trees in the bush) and export, through the medium of Hausa traders, quantities of desiccated honey (resembling coke cinders) as far afield as Kano and Yerwa (Maiduguri). According to all observers, there are few crafts; women weave coarse wickerwork baskets and also the *oyam*, technically an article of considerable refinement; men produce checked or twilled palm-fibre rain-capes and basket-covers, and in recent years appear to have adopted the characteristically Ikulu mat industry (see below). The chief item of wood carving is the woman's head-board (it is not clear whether the *obwai* wears a mask of wood). A variety of musical instruments are produced, but there is

[a] This section refers particularly to Katab of Zangon Katab District.

[b] Wielding the heavy spurred hoe, the effect of which in operation reminds one somehow of both the spade and the simple plough; see plate 5, p. 45 of *Tribal Studies*, II.

Secondary affinal marriage occurs: a man may inherit widows of his grandfather, father and brother, but only when these are young women and do not have adult lineal descendants with whom they can live.[26a]

Seniority is important among women of the compound, as among men, but how seniority is determined, in view of the complexities arising through the institution of secondary marriage, is not clear.[27] A husband spends two nights with each of his wives in turn, in his own hut, if he has one. Men and women eat in separate groups, the women always in or before the hut of the chief wife. If there is a tendency towards friction between successive generations, relations between alternate generations are characterized by a degree of cordiality. According to Meek, relations between and among siblings reflect a similar convention: on the whole, alternate children are closer and take greater pleasure in one another's company than successive children.

Death and Burial

Meek's statement that "illnesses and premature deaths are ascribed to witchcraft, and those who die of smallpox are believed to have been witches," is not apparently meant to be taken literally.[28] Without exception treatments for illness described by Meek appear to have no element of magic about them: there is even "inoculation for smallpox, the fluid being taken from the pustules of a man suffering from a mild attack, and transfused into the blood of a healthy man by means of a scratch made with a razor," which, though it differs from current European medical procedure, is not alleged to be a witch-finding ordeal.

Interment generally follows death within 12 to 18 hours, though the burial of a civil chief, whose death is kept secret for seven days, may be delayed for 24 hours if necessary to comply with the rule that a chief must be buried under cover of night. The body of a commoner is clothed in the short Hausa-Fulani gown (*tobe*), that of a chief in a robe (*riga*), and finally wrapped in an ordinary mat of palm-fibre. Burial is generally in the home-compound; old men and chiefs are buried beneath the entrance-hut. The grave is described as decanter-shaped, about 6 ft. deep. If the deceased has been a man of importance, a stone is set up on the grave to mark the site for his descendants who may wish to make offerings to their dead ancestor (see *Religious Beliefs and Practices*, below).

When burial—presided over by the *magajin elenowum*—is complete, horns are sounded (if the deceased had reached a respectable age), beer is drunk, and a feast may follow. In the case of a chief, his immediate relatives are "officially" informed of his death—and burial—a week later, but public announcement is not made for perhaps a month, when a general feast is held. According to Meek, however, "the real funeral feast" will not be held until the dry season (presumably delayed only in case of death in the rains): this lasts for two days, during which the senior male relatives go to the *obwai* hut, then come forth and join in a general dance.

Regarding mourning, Meek says that a widow allows her hair to grow long, refrains from washing and smears her body daily with ochre for one or two months. At the end of this period she is shaved and washed in the river by female relatives. Though men themselves do not make a display of mourning, a woman mourns in

[26a] A woman may choose, apparently, whether she will be inherited by her husband's son or grandson.

[27] The wives of any man rank according to the length of time they have been his wives; but it is not stated whether a wife loses seniority by absence (as the secondary wife of another man), whether a secondary wife ever out-ranks a primary wife, or how the wives of males of varying rank in the compound are ranked (whether, for example, the senior wife of the senior male, or compound head, is inevitably the senior woman of the compound, even though she may be very junior from the point of view of actual residence). It is made clear only that the age of the women does not enter into calculation of their rank.

[28] Meek's qualification of this statement appears in an earlier section of his account of Katab, where he notes that the Katab "does not surround himself with amulets and talismans" nor live in constant dread of evil spirits.

According to
Temple, twins are considered lucky. An " unsound " child was drowned, at about
845 the age of four years, " or sometimes later." Children are suckled two years,
847 according to Tremearne, during which time the wife lives apart from her husband:
during this period, in the case of the first-born of any union (see *Marriage*,
853 below), the mother resides in her parents' compound, according to Smith; and after
its termination, towards the end of the dry season, she prepares beer for the annual
obwai rites of her father's clan (see *Burial* and *Religious Beliefs*, below).

Initiation

852 Boys are circumcised at about the age of eight years—whether or not ritually
or in groups is not indicated. At about 10 years, apparently in groups, they are
304 initiated into the *obwai* cult: according to Smith, each clan has its own *obwai* priest
and shrine; whether any attempt is made to co-ordinate the initiation rites held by
the different clans is not stated. Temple describes the initiation rites as follows
(after Tremearne): " [The boys] are first shaved, greased and beaten, and are then
taken to the sacred grove, but they may not yet drink with the men. They leave
the grove and dance all night, and dancing and drinking goes on for another seven
days, when they return to their houses, but they may not speak to a woman till
another seven days have elapsed." During the course of their detention, the boys
are told that *obwai* is a secret invention to discipline women, according to Smith.
Revealing this secret to women was punished with death or banishment before
Administration, and is still discouraged, though Smith states that " in 20th century
conditions [*obwai*] does not command awe among initiated males, and has lost
some former functions."

According to Temple: " The tribal marks are the same for both sexes and are
inflicted at certain epochs in their lives—the boys have their foreheads scarified when
they are able to hoe. A girl has her chest and back marked on reaching marriage-
able age. . . ."

As already indicated, there is said to have been no special mark to identify a
554 man who had taken a head, but, according to Tremearne, a man " was not supposed
727 to have attained to the full dignity of manhood until he had killed someone " (see
p. 96, above).

Marriage

Smith's analysis of Kagoro marriage is the most detailed available for peoples
591 treated in this volume. An adaptation of his more complete account follows.

In general, marriage among Kagoro conforms very closely to Meek's descrip-
595 tion of the institution among Katab. Basically, marriage is virilocal, though a
couple may share the husband's father's or husband's mother's brother's compound.
Polygyny is permitted, that is, a man may support several wives in his compound
simultaneously; a woman may have several husbands simultaneously, in fact, but
her several husbands always maintain separate compounds in different villages, and
583 there she " visits " them.[84] Marriage contracts may be classified as follows:

(1) Primary: bride is unmarried.[85]

(2) Secondary: bride has been previously married to any man other than (i) a fellow clansman or (ii) one in the *niendi* relationship.[86]

(*a*) By betrothal.

(*b*) By capture.

[84] Smith rejects the term *polyandry* as applying among Kagoro: however, *serial polyandry* seems to this investigator useful and meaningful in this situation, if it is made clear that divorce is not implicit in the term.

[85] *N.B.*, traditionally, no such thing as divorce existed among Kagoro.

[86] As regards marriage in general, relations between Kagoro clans (*kwai*) are classified as *niendi*, or as *nendwang:* a man takes his primary wife or wives from among the previously unmarried girls of clans that are traditionally in the *niendi* relationship with his own clan; he takes secondary wives from among the *wives* of men of clans in the *nendwang* relationship with his own clan and living in another village. (Close examination of Smith's report does not reveal whether women born into the same clan as his own primary wife, when married to men of clans *nendwang* with respect to the man's own clan, are excepted.)

3:Temple G-4 (no date)1922 FF38 Katab FF38
Kagoma

575 "Each candidate on election is given a gourd, but as it was foreseen that indiscriminate blowing would soon familiarise the women with the 'Dodo's' voice, no one is permitted to blow the gourd without the Magajin Dodo's consent.

"Each village has its 'Dodo' head-man, known as the Magajin Dodo. He is the supreme domestic authority and no woman, not even his wife, is allowed to enter what is designated as his 'Dodo' room. The office is hereditary, and as a rule descends from father to son. The Magajin Dodo always wears a goat-skin slung across his back. He is naturally an object of much awe to the women folk, who endeavour to propitiate him with frequent gifts of 'gia,' so that the venerable gentleman is often to be encountered in a hopelessly drunken condition. 593 It is to him that husbands appeal when their wives turn 626 refractory, and a visit from the dreaded 'Dodo' invariably 575 produces the desired effect. When the Magaji visits a disobedient wife, he is always accompanied by one of his four subordinates, called Magadda in Kagoma. The visit is prearranged and the husband plays the part of a willing accomplice in the ensuing farce.

"The approaching visit of the 'Dodo' is announced to the husband by a messenger sent on in front for that purpose. The husband professes to be very frightened and advises his wives to fly and hide in the *nearest* refuge. (This is so that they shall not be far away when wanted.) On the arrival of the 'Dodo' the erring wife is sent for. Should she refuse to come, the 'Dodo' approaches her hiding-place, and addresses his warning; the uncouth sounds made on the gourd being solemnly translated to her by the subordinate who acts as interpreter throughout. A warning is generally sufficient, but should the wife transgress again the 'Dodo' will order her to be beaten.

"To further impress these simple and credulous women with his powers, the Magajin Dodo will sit outside his house and carry on a conversation with the 'Dodo' who is inside. This is done, of course, by hiding a man inside the house who makes the necessary sounds on the gourd."*

595 There is no limit to the number of wives that may be kept, 262 and the first takes precedence over the rest. They are not allowed to eat meat, or much salt, lest they should become fat and therefore unprolific.

846 On the day that a woman gives birth to a child both she 553 and it are bathed in cold water. Two days later the family-head, *i.e.*, the eldest male member of the family, names the child, 845 of whichever sex it be, except in the case of twins, who are named 852 two months after birth by the oldest man in the village. On

* Mr. H. F. Mathews.

3: Temple G-4 (no date)1922 FF38 Katab FF38
Kagoro

When they are about ten years old boys are initiated in these mysteries. They are first shaved, greased and beaten, and are then taken to the sacred grove, but they may not yet drink with the men. They leave the grove and dance all night, and dancing and drinking goes on for another seven days, when they return to their houses, but they may not speak to a woman till another seven days have elapsed. 852

They do not marry until they are sixteen or eighteen years of age, their brides being three or four years younger. The procedure is for the suitor to give the girl's father from four to ten thousand cowries when he proposes. If he is accepted he adds one hoe, one goat, one dog and the flesh of another goat to the gift—an average example which varies according to the wealth of the contracting parties. Beer is prepared by his people, and taken on the wedding day to the bride's house, where drinking goes on for from one to ten days. On the first day the mother takes her daughter to the young man's house for a brief visit, and receives a complimentary present of 2,000 cowries or a hoe—later he comes to her house—and on the second day he takes his wife to his own house where she remains. There is intermarriage between certain tribes, *i.e.*, the Attakka, Moroa, Kaje and Katab, but a Kagoro man will prefer a maiden of his own or of the Attakka tribe, because the others refuse to clear grass for the farms. A virgin may only marry during the wet season, after the seed has been sown. At the end of the millet farming she puts on her married woman's costume and her husband celebrates the occasion by killing a dog and eating its head, liver, entrails and legs, while he gives the neck to those that helped him in courtship, and the remainder to his father-in-law. The blood of slaughtered beasts is always eaten, cooked with fat. If the wife is considered satisfactory her husband gives her mother another present. A girl has the right of refusal and can obtain a divorce, subject to her father's consent, for he retains the legal power to persuade her to go back to her husband, to leave him, or to marry her to someone else. He also has the right of possession over her children, unless her husband redeems them by payment of three goats each. This practice has been put down by the British Government. 582 585 [591] [252] [586]

Children are suckled for two or three years. Boys are named by their father and are circumcised, a very old custom. If a child proves unsound before it is about four years old, or sometimes later, it is thought to be a snake and may be thrown into water. Twins are considered very lucky. 862 304 553 845 847

A man's first wife has authority over subsequent wives and may even beat them, a right so fully recognised that, if these latter forget themselves so far as to retaliate, their parents give her beer. The women all eat together, helping themselves with their right hands, for men alone are allowed the use of spoons. 595 [264]

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563 58. The Kaje elements to be found in this district live near the eastern border adjoining the main body of the Kaje tribe living in the Zangon Katab district. They live partly within the Hausa enclave—the Gumel and Mazuga villages—and partly within the Jabawa tribal lands. Those in the Jabawa area live on *borrowed* lands; those in the Hausa enclave on their *own* lands through which the administrative boundary cuts. This is a point which may lead to confusion at some future date.
[61] The Kadara are similarly situated. The main body of Kadara who number some 21,246 in the Province are to be found in the adjoining Kajuru district. The district boundary runs through the tribal area—probably for reasons stated in paragraph 14 above and because a purely tribal boundary for administrative purpose would be very complicated and produce little effective difference, *qua* administration. The Kuturmi are an interesting relic. They are said to have come originally from Kano City and are a branch of the Kutumbawa who reside there to this present day.

Jabawa tenure Kachia District.

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621 59. The pattern of tenure amongst the Kachia Jaba is very similar to that obtaining with the Kwoi Jaba. There are, however, two very significant differences. We have seen (paragraph 44 above) that with the Kwoi Jaba it was impossible to correlate the social pattern with the land pattern. In the Kachia district the Jaba almost at once stated that their five territorial village units were, except for a minor amount of interchange, identical with the five kindreds of the tribe. The Wenyum kindred were to be found in Gidan Tagwai village unit, Dun in Jaban Kogo, Kudak in Kwaturu, Chorr in Kurmin Musa and Ngeh at Gidan Jibir. Members of the latter two kindreds, they stated, would be found amongst the Jaba Kwoi but none of the first three.

Breakdown to individual tenure less pronounced.

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556 60. The second significant difference is in the extent of the breakdown to the individual basis. Whereas in Kwoi individual farming was the rule and not the exception in the Kachia district farming on a family basis was the rule with the Jaba and individual holdings the exception. This difference is well known to the Jaba themselves who explain it thus. The Jaba Kwoi are a poverty stricken people who can only run to one wife apiece as a normal rule whereas they can run to four or five—even ten on occasions. The Jaba Kwoi youths are an irresponsible lot who go running off to the mines to make money and do not look after their lands properly; their own youths stay at home and become good farmers on the family lands. Shades of the ' resistance movement ' that lead to the ancestors of the Jaba Kwoi continuing the struggle when their weaker brethren succumbed!